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**Bard**

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## **STEPS (2. SABBATHS)**

1.

Not hear from all side  
the listen one  
nor message brutal  
into the calm wake  
subsiding of a self went  
not long before  
bare trees stood  
close together in new sun

2.

Sabbath commandment  
or a bird  
a leaf knows its way  
to the ground  
sometimes devious  
the roots of gravity  
we also fall

3.

but who insists  
is evidence  
“I” want “you”  
for a church

say mass in  
pure motion in  
personless glory  
now arrives

4.

gatekeeper carry  
the frontier these  
pale rememberers  
drunk on mere dawn

5.

this as much as feels  
new coin likely aluminum  
a translation from value  
into utility something even  
if less than loaf of bread

6.

cure the system  
in one generation  
buy only the intrinsic

7.

younger heal faster  
universal suffrage  
ages the commonwealth

all leaves no fruit  
watch the dancers  
decide

8.

Wotan's madness  
is to think  
worlds can be created  
or otherwise  
he did it or someone—  
gods rage against the real

9.

gradually getting  
better it hurts  
the moral excitement  
of narrative  
then it was night

10.

dense branches bare  
shredding sunlight  
into denser  
intervals  
                    looking  
discovers what  
music actually means

11.

have the authority to say so  
it's all a museum anyhow  
one day a week is always closed

12.

my breath is short but my arms are long  
so you don't leave without saying goodbye.

6 November 2011

= = = = =

Where did the star go I saw last night  
if not right here in the struggle to name it  
as things vanish into their names

above freezing, taking out the trash  
thinking about Ted Enslin and Orion, this  
is not Orion, this was something all by itself

a wanderer in a crowded forest  
I could swear it was smiling, smiling at me  
me through the everlasting trees of air.

6 November 2011

## EVOLUTION OF THE REPTILES

or somewhen choosing  
to be only for yourself  
doing nothing for the world  
but take in.

No. Even there  
is virtue found.  
Destabilize the calm.  
To lurk. The way  
meaning lurks in propositions.  
To be danger. To instruct.  
Wisdom of the Nagas  
who have no work but wariness.

6 November 2011

= = = = =

Who know who they mean  
when they say me? Not I.

6.XI.11



= = = = =

The funny candidate  
scratchy dried linden blossoms  
snugged into the peasant blouse low neckline  
and a man walks by with a whippet

it could be a dream or early afternoon  
late summer in Sankt-Georgen (Black  
Forest) but it's me they laugh at, kindly,  
the way you'd smile at pigeons in low clouds.

7 November 2011

= = = = =

But the very thin girl  
friendly warned me  
of the dangerous box

then sat two seats past me  
on the uptown express  
beyond two kids in climbing gear

these images have meaning  
of a sort, maybe like a bus  
transfer expired fifty years past.

7 November 2011

= = = = =

The vee of tree  
from one root  
ascending  
gracile as anti-  
lope horns  
uplifted *in deserto*—  
warily warily my love  
will there be a place  
for me between  
those columns  
holy doorway to  
the temple of air?

7 November 2011

**BEFORE THE FIRST COMMANDMENT EVEN**

Buy one  
of everything  
and let the  
lady choose.

7.XI.11

## **SURSUM CORDA**

Something closer, like a paradise.  
Heart summoned to lift up  
is grumpy, drags the heart-heels  
whines for its mother. But the heart  
has no mother, the heart is pure,  
startles and pure traffic, intention,  
needs no instruction, left  
to itself will unlock Eden and dance in.

7 November 2011

## THICKET

The eye moves in where the rest of me can't—  
we do strange things when we're alive

time, for instance, how much of it we spill  
into the stupidest mischances—work,  
religion, sciences—when we could

endure the actual, glories of an afternoon  
or all-delivering scholarship of night.

7 November 2011

= = = = =

To be a land across the river  
the way silver is across the street from gold  
a beach at sunrise nobody there  
two fishermen two furlongs out from shore

one hopes they catch nothing, or everything  
and give a lot to me, I refuse on principle,  
a barnacle's a living thing, the sea  
is a mouth full of living words

why don't I hear, or can't,  
anything but roar? To get there,  
to build my house out of a single moment  
and be there long past the end.

7 November 2011

### STEPS (3)

1.

And this to be  
to say to you  
a lamb bleating for its mother  
holds this gold world

the natural *is* the supernatural

this gold world leaf and bracken  
the backyard is  
of a high strange house

palace of the way it will be.

2.

Think on it  
every pain  
and small delight  
a guerdon is  
or recompense

*amor fati*, then,  
everything we do  
happens to us—



not a circle, liebster Fritz,  
but a spiral  
of reciprocals  
twists till it comes  
to the point of all this

hurt nobody help all  
and watch the watcher watch.

3.

Maybe even more than that  
we come back to get done to what we did

but there is no we, only you, only me,  
this desert island of seven billion souls.

4.

Graven image: that means coin  
means property. Increase and divide.  
The locusts were crying when I crossed  
knee-deep I seemed  
to stand among them  
before the river. Idaho.  
Then a river then a woman  
reading on the porch.  
One of the four billion faces of god.

5.

But god is not natural.  
Though lovable,  
this import from Palestine.  
Or Egypt. Who knows  
the whole sentence of which  
God is the verb?

6.

Never have been comfortable  
in my 'own' name.  
And my shoes are tight.

7.

And so we come back to California  
where most of me began  
and the santa ana blew down Lake  
and scoured me clean of East New York  
and I bought big sneakers at the original Van's  
and lapped up menudo nights at Barragan's  
and fell in love with one more librarian  
but what broke my heart were the poor  
old shuffling waiters at Kabakian's  
who would lift the first forkful to the diner's lips.

8.

Because it's mostly about eating  
isn't it and being fed  
that's what the lamb wants  
or thinks it does, thinks  
it is *Food*  
*was the first accident*  
replacement of the genuine  
sustaining flow.

It was supposed to be love  
that does all the answering.  
Don't give me food  
the lamb says, give me  
what I need.

9.

And I misheard your name  
and the red leaves still blaze on the burning bush.  
Tell me again where we first met—  
but there is no we, I said,  
there is only geography,  
naked skin, sleek leather couch.

10.

The shadow of the house I'm sitting in  
stretches out on somebody else's lawn.

I have no shadow of my own, or am included  
in the shadow of where not what I am.  
It chastens me to see the somber grass  
limned by the bright green, and I recognize  
all I am is in that shadow, indistinct,  
a company-man of everything that is, indistinct,  
my voice a rumble in the tumbling stream across the road.  
As if the Ancients had written: *Hide*  
*a shadow in a shadow. Live forever.*

11

A song bush  
an afterplay  
the glow  
of knowing  
all of you  
all the glad  
pretending  
makes us true.  
The odd number  
of me and you.

8 November 2011

= = = = =

This old now.

This ancient

moment,

the missing

present. All gold.

All gone.

8 November 2011